



Introduction to “Basics”

We will be serialising the ten-week “[Basics](#)” course this year. This course was designed to satisfy comrades who are impatient to acquire the political fundamentals quickly.

At the same time, it is designed to open doors to further studies, including, but not limited to, the other 15 courses of the Communist University (find them [here](#)).

After this one, each post will have linked to it at least one PDF file of an original text, formatted for printing as a booklet. The post will consist of an opening to a discussion of that text.

Please join in the dialogue around these posts. Serialising the courses so that we are all reading the same texts is what allows such dialogue around a common topic.

By contributing to dialogue, you will multiply the value of this course for yourself, and for others.

Education

The course begins with reflections on the theory of teaching and learning. This is so that we can know what we are doing,

how we will do it, and why. In general, the theory that underlies the pedagogical approach of the Communist University is that of **Paulo Freire**, author of “The Pedagogy of the Oppressed”. Not only is it crucial to ourselves as we proceed, but it is also given as a political method, and as the actual substance of political practice. Education is politics, and politics is education. Education takes place in dialogue.

The rest of the course

The second part leads with **Machiavelli**, backed up with texts on Capital and The State by **Marx and Engels** respectively. The third part is the Communist Manifesto of 1848, followed by summarising works by **Lenin** and Engels in the fourth part. By this stage we should have made out a general outline of the material history of the world, and of its constant class struggles.

In the fifth part we come back to South Africa to look at the **SACP**’s short constitution, and to other crucial South African documents: the 1955 Freedom Charter and the 1969 Morogoro “Strategy and Tactics” document of the **ANC**.

In the sixth and seventh parts we deal with the relation of the vanguard party to the mass organisations of the working class, in particular trade unions and their work of collective bargaining with capitalist employers. Then we go straight to Karl Marx’s classic lecture on this topic, “Value, Price and Profit”, backed up by the great Chapter One of Marx’s **Capital, Volume 1**, on Commodities.

In part nine we return to a closer examination of the state, starting with Lenin's lecture on the state, and then using two great classics, Engels' "Origin of the Family, Private Property and The State", and Lenin's "The State and Revolution".

The tenth part is dedicated to the on-going struggle against Imperialism, using several short texts and then concluding with **Joe Slovo's** great "The South African Working Class and the National Democratic Revolution".

The whole course can be downloaded in the form of PDF files, printable as booklets, from:

<http://studycircle.wikispaces.com/11+Basics>